by the Telecom Commission;

(b) whether any consultant has been appointed by Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the criterion adopted by Government to appoint the consultant, and the details of the companies who had applied for this purpose; and

(d) by when this process is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) Some consultations and presentations have been started to determine best arrangement for maximizing the synergies between MTNL & BSNL. The Government has not appointed any consultant so far.

E-post in Karnataka

2237. SHRI K. B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICA-TIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to launch E-Post in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the new initiatives taken by the Department of Posts in the State during the year 2002-03?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICA-TIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Department proposes to launch e-post in Karnataka Circle depending upon the availability of computers, internet connectivity in the stations selected and development of other related infrastructure.

(c) Speednet providing track & trace facility for Speed Post has been extended to Bagalkot, Bidar, Bijapur, Gadag, Sirsi and Chikmagalur Post Offices in Karnataka Circle during the year 2002-2003. E-bill post services have been extended to 20 more post offices in Bangalore City.

Further, Western Union Money Transfer Service was extended to 220 post offices and the facility of Multipurpose Counter Machines was expanded to 36 post offices.